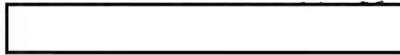


Chase

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OLC 72-0954
24 August 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Response to Representatives Aspin and Rangel
Re Drug Traffic

1. Today I called Chairman Edward Hebert, of the House Armed Services Committee, at his home in New Orleans to ask if I might come down to meet with him briefly regarding a problem that caused us some concern. He said he was confined to his home for a complete rest and was under doctor's orders to receive no visitors. However, he said he would be glad to discuss our problem on the phone.

2. I explained that Representative Aspin had addressed several questions to us regarding allegations of Agency involvement in the illicit narcotics traffic, and that these allegations had been carefully investigated and found to be groundless. I said the Director planned to write Mr. Aspin to this effect but would like to let the Chairman know of the situation and would appreciate the Chairman's thoughts on two points in particular: (a) whether to provide Aspin with a detailed account of the results of our investigation, or merely a brief statement that the allegations had been investigated and found baseless, and (b) whether our response should be sent forthwith or at some later date, perhaps even after the election.

3. Mr. Hebert said the response should be as brief as possible showing Mr. Aspin only the "minimum courtesy" and providing him with only the "minimum information." He saw no advantage in delaying our response.

4. Replying to my further question, Mr. Hebert said he thought I should mention the problem to Mr. Nedzi, Chairman of the Special Subcommittee on Intelligence, and agreed that we should file with Mr. Nedzi's Subcommittee a classified summary of our investigation of the matter.

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5. Accordingly, I met later in the day with Mr. Nedzi. (I did not tell him of my conversation with Mr. Hebert lest he be offended that I had gone first to Hebert and not to him.) I showed Nedzi Aspin's letter to the Director and a brief draft response (both attached). He said he thought we had no choice but to respond to Aspin as suggested. He also welcomed the proposal to file with his Subcommittee a classified summary of our investigation.

6. In our ensuing conversation, Mr. Nedzi asked a number of questions about what might be done, and had been done, to cope with the drug traffic in Southeast Asia. I said that we were talking about sovereign countries in which the Agency had no police authority, but I pointed out the specific measures we had been taking subject to this limitation. Nedzi asked what would happen if we cut off our support unless the Laotians exercised more effective control over the drug traffic. I explained the vital importance of our Laotian operations in the context of the Indochina war generally and the fact that, as a result of both pressure from us and the vicissitudes of war, opium production in Northern Laos had been falling off substantially. This seemed to satisfy him.

7. I then explained to Mr. Nedzi the history of our exchanges with Mr. Rangel on the same general subject and showed him a proposed reply to Mr. Rangel's latest inquiry (copies attached). Mr. Nedzi found this proposal satisfactory.

8. During our discussion--our meeting lasted an hour and a half--I responded to a number of Mr. Nedzi's questions on Soviet strategic weapons, the Middle East situation, Vietnam, etc.

9. I also took advantage of the occasion to acquaint Mr. Nedzi in detail with our problems with the "Ervin bill" rider to the pending Civil Rights bill.

10. It was clear that Mr. Nedzi is particularly concerned with the drug problem, and he said he had been carefully studying the recently published Cabinet Committee study on the world opium situation. He gave no indication of being dissatisfied or suspicious of the Agency's denials of any implication in the drug traffic, but on this, as on other matters, Mr. Nedzi takes nothing for granted and accepts everything he is told with at least initial skepticism. For this reason, I think it is particularly important that

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the classified summary of the investigation which we file with his Subcommittee be quite complete and candid. We are committed only to covering the specific allegations referred to by Mr. Aspin, but within this context I believe our summary should be prepared with meticulous care, and I have discussed this with [redacted] DDP/NARCOG, who is assembling the necessary material.

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[redacted]
JOHN M. MAURY
Legislative Counsel

Attachments

Distribution:

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